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Evangelical Missionaries to Honduras

By

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Evangelical Missionaries to Honduras

SINCE we are about to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Evangelical Mission in Honduras, C. A., we need to become better acquainted with the men and women to whom we have entrusted a commission from the Evangelical Synod of North America to the Honduranean of Central America. More than the commission given these men and women by the Evangelical Synod is the greater confidence placed in them by our Lord and Master who said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

They have kept the faith; and we present to our readers our missionaries.

Henry A. Dewald was sent to Honduras in January, 1920, on a trip of investigation, by the Board of Foreign Missions. Mr. Dewald was especially fitted for such a commission, having served twelve years on the Gold Coast, British West Africa, under the Basel Mission, in school and organization work. He spent over a year in San Pedro Sula, studying the language, making trips for observation, seeking points of contact, and devising ways and means of organizing missionary work in Honduras. He returned to the States in August, 1921, to lay the cause before the General Conference at New Bremen, Ohio. At that Conference, Honduras was accepted as the Synod's second mission field. The missionary then

entered definitely into the service of the Board of Foreign Missions, and returned to Honduras in January, 1922, as the Chairman of the Honduras Conference.

In October, 1923, Mr. Dewald was united in marriage to Miss Gertrude Riecke of St. Louis, Mo., a missionary on the field. In the fall of 1928, Mr. and Mrs. Dewald returned to the States for a period of rest and recuperation. Now they have accepted a call to a home mission charge at Atlanta, Georgia.

Their home has been brightened by three little sons, Robert, Paul, and Charles.

Harold N. Auler was born at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Mr. Auler received his education in the public schools, Elmhurst College, and in Eden Seminary. He early volunteered his service for India; but the World War closed the way to that field. He did not, however, withdraw his application, and during the interval he took over the work at Caroline Mission, St. Louis, where he was ably assisted by Mrs. Auler who had, previous to her marriage, been a worker at the Mission.

In February, 1921, Mr. and Mrs. Auler sailed for Honduras instead of India. Here he found his particular field of service in evangelism and personal work, not only in San Pedro Sula, but in the villages, camps, on the farms, and among the scattered huts that may be found hidden away in the mountains. They went on their first furlough in 1926, and on their return Mr. Auler was appointed chairman of

the Honduras Mission Conference. At present, Mr. and Mrs. Auler are again on furlough in the States.

Mrs. Louise Esser Auler was born in St. Louis, Mo. She was educated in the St. Louis public schools. After her graduation from high school, she was employed in an office during the day and also attended a night school for Christian workers at the St. Louis Y. W. C. A. Later she became a worker at Caroline Mission.

On the mission field, Mrs. Auler has found her place in many spheres, not the least of which is that of boarding the unmarried workers. Visitation, Sunday school work, and evangelistic trips with Mr. Auler when she can leave her home, constitute a part of her service.

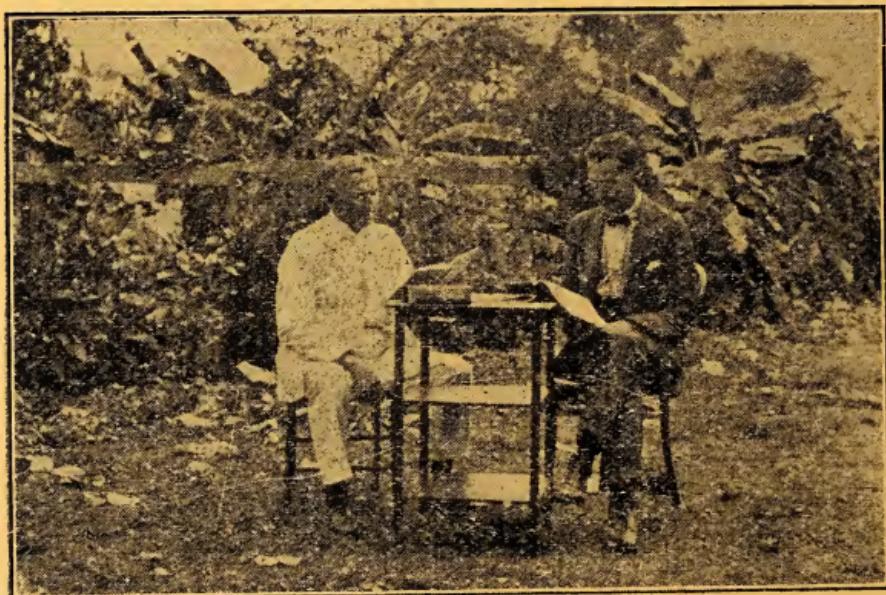
Their union has been blessed by twin sons, Harold and Richard.

Miss Anna D. Bechtold was born at Wichita, Kansas. Her education began in the public schools, and culminated in the University of Kansas. She took up high school teaching as her profession. While serving as teacher of English in the high school of Wichita, she volunteered for service in South America, was accepted, and received an appointment for the Argentine, under a Methodist Board. Nevertheless, her father persuaded her to wait one year. Then followed a course in the Evangelical Leadership Training School at Elmhurst, and also the prospects of work in Honduras by the Evangelical Synod. Miss Bechtold withdrew from the

Methodist Board, offered her services to the Evangelical Synod, and on January 23, 1921, she was commissioned by the late Dr. John Baltzer for foreign mission service. On February 14, 1921, she arrived at Puerto Cortes with Mr. and Mrs. Auler.

Miss Bechtold founded Bethany, the boarding home for girls, and also the Day School; the former is now superintended by others, but the latter is under her direction. She is its principal. She is also active in evangelism and Sunday school work. Her Sunday school class, "Mensajeras de la Luz" (Messengers of Light) are young women of high school age.

Mrs. Gertrude Riecke Dewald received her religious education in Bethel Church and Sunday



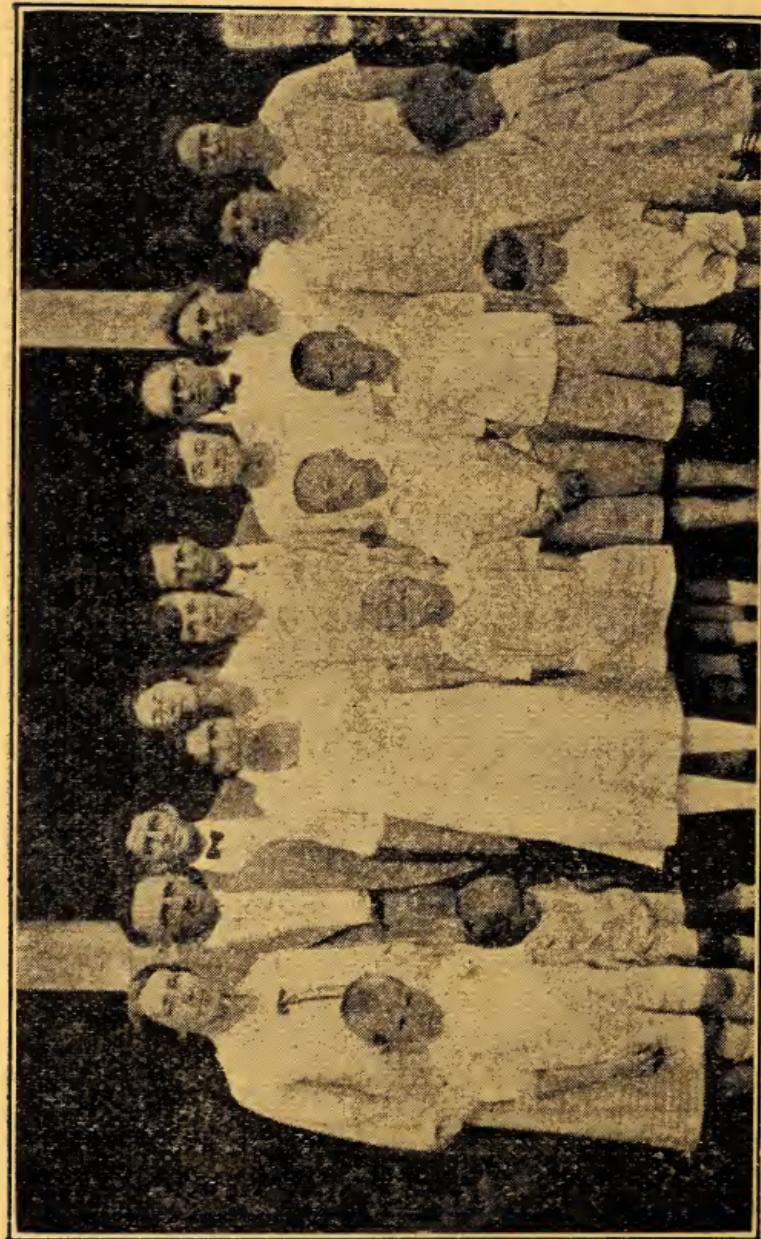
Rev. Dewald and his Spanish teacher

School of St. Louis, Mo. A course at Moody Bible Institute brought her in touch with the needs of Latin America, the Student Volunteer Movement, and the Board of Foreign Missions. After her graduation from the Institute, Miss Riecke took a short course in nursing at the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, and a summer course at the Harris Teachers' College in St. Louis. She was called to Honduras, and arrived on the field February 14, 1922, one year after the arrival of the first missionaries. School, Sunday school work, weekly visits to the city hospital, and emergency calls were her special fields of service.

Mrs. Edith Moulton Melick was born at North Branch, N. J. Most of her early life was spent in Plainfield, N. J. where she received a public school education. Her desire was to become a school teacher. The way, however, was closed to that profession, and she took up bookkeeping.

In the fall of 1903, Miss Moulton was united in marriage to David Melick of North Branch, where they resided until Mr. Melick's death in 1906. Again Mrs. Melick turned to business, until she entered Moody Bible Institute in 1920. While at the Institute she met several young people of the Evangelical Synod, and within five days after her graduation she received a call to Honduras. She arrived at San Pedro Sula October 31, 1922, as the matron of the girls' boarding home. Her health, however, would not permit her to stay in the tropics, and on August 1, 1924, she sailed for New York. Another

Our missionaries on the field in 1928



trip was made in 1927 for a four months' visit and to prepare a handbook on our missionary enterprise there—"Seed Sowing in Honduras."

Miss Elise A. Goepfarth was born at Richmond, Virginia. From her earliest recollections she was interested in teaching. She played teacher at six years of age; she coached her fellow students during the last term of high school; she planned to enter college, but entered an art school instead, and later the Richmond Kindergarten Training School.

Miss Goepfarth's first field of service was at Lynchburg, Va. as kindergarten and settlement worker among the cotton mill employees. While there, her Christian life was deepened, and with the deepening came a desire to work on the foreign field. Two years of training at Moody Bible Institute, one year as assistant to her pastor in Richmond, preceded her entering the field of Honduras. She arrived September 15, 1923, and entered the school as teacher of the first grade. During her first term, she gathered boys from the streets for a Sunday school class, organized the children's work, instituted systematic house to house visitation and founded a sub-mission in Bario Medina, a section of San Pedro Sula. Her second term is devoted to visiting homes, personal work, and conducting children's meetings. Her chief concern is to make the Honduranean see what she discovered in the cotton mill town, that "in Christ alone is salvation, and in Christ alone is cleansing."

Miss Louise Vordenberg was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she grew to womanhood, and entered in the church life of Price Hill Evangelical Church. She began a business career as accountant and book-keeper. While she attended night classes to perfect herself in her chosen profession, another influence was working in her life that brought her to a complete consecration of self to the Master in Christian service. Her attention was directed to Honduras, and she offered herself. During the interval of waiting, she took a full Bible course at Moody Bible Institute, and sailed for Honduras in January, 1924.

Miss Vordenberg filled a sore need in the school as teacher, and fitted in the general evangelistic pro-



Miss GoepfARTH telling the Christmas story

gram. In the fall of 1926, she took over Bethany, the boarding home for girls, which was under her direction until her first furlough was due. Since her return in October, 1928, she conducts children's meetings, special classes in the school, visits native homes, and has full charge of the weekly evangelistic services in La Lima—Sunday school and preaching.

Frederick Andres of Weingarten, in the Palatinate, Germany, secretly pledged himself to the Lord to serve in the foreign field at the age of fifteen years. Several years later, with the full consent of his parents, he entered Basel Mission House for a course in missionary education. His first charge was on the Gold Coast, British West Africa, where he served from 1912-1917, when British war measures brought the work of the Basel Mission to an end in British territory.

In October, 1920, Mr. Andres was married to Miss Lina Schuetthelm of Mannheim, Baden; and in 1922 they sailed for America. Mr. Andres accepted a pastorate in Marshfield, Wisconsin. He remained here until called by the Board of Foreign Missions to Honduras, C. A., in the beginning of 1924.

During their first term they took over the work among the German-speaking people, were the first house-parents of Bethel, the boarding home for boys, and Mr. Andres was the first pastor of the Chameleon congregation. They entered upon their second term in 1928; and upon the new duties as pastor of the station church, the First Evangelical Church of

San Pedro Sula; Mr. Andres finds a large field of service in evangelistic trips in outlying districts.

Four children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Andres—Helmut, Gudrun, Gerhardt, and Doris Ruth.

Mrs. Lina Schuetthelm Andres' home was in Mannheim, Baden. She was led to Christ by a Christian governess; and through a visit to the Christian summer resort, "Schoenblick", in Wuerttemberg, "God gave her way a new turn, and her life a new aim." Mrs. Andres is an accomplished violinist, and she has not spared her talent in the service of her Master in Honduras.

Miss Bertha M. Scheidt received her early education in the public schools of her birthplace, Van Wert, Ohio. Later she entered Teachers' College of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. After graduation she taught in the Junior High School of Van Wert, and at Connersville, Indiana. While at the latter place, Miss Scheidt came to a decision that gave an early desire, long repressed, the right of way—and she visited her deaconess sister, Sister Minnie Scheidt, at "Sunny Rest", Colorado Springs.

Long ago, the consistent life of Sister Minnie had created a desire in the younger sister to enter Christian work. The hope would not be stilled; and the silent, prayerful influence of the workers at "Sunny Rest", the opportunities for service, and the quiet workings of the Spirit led Miss Scheidt to a definite decision—complete consecration. Obstacles

were overcome; a two years' course in Moody Bible Institute, another year of teaching in her home town, a call from the Board of Foreign Missions, without her solicitation, led Miss Scheidt to Honduras in September, 1924, as a missionary teacher.

Her first term was spent in the class-room, Sunday school, and evangelistic trips as time permitted. In the fall of 1929, she returned to the mission field after a home furlough, to take up teaching and the supervision of native student teachers. At this time she is entering upon her new duties as directress of Bethany, where she will influence the lives of twenty or more girls.

Miss Louise R. Kurz of Louisville, Kentucky, attributes her missionary interest to the influence and information gained through reading missionary literature, and listening to missionary speakers. It was after an address by Dr. and Mrs. Gass, who spoke in one of the Louisville churches, that Miss Kurz expressed her desire to become a missionary. She entered Moody Bible Institute for a full Bible course. After graduation, she received a call from her home church to become their parish worker, where she served for three years. During this time the desire to become a missionary was not put aside: it was a time of waiting, and hoping, and praying for the way to open.

The Rev. H. A. Dewald visited St. Paul's Church in 1925, and presented the needs of Honduras. The pastor was touched; the congregation was touched; and the parish worker was ready to go. Miss Kurz

was called by the Board of Foreign Missions in the fall of 1926, was commissioned from her home church, and sailed for Honduras in January, 1927. This first term she has found her field of service as the directress of Bethany; and as the able assistant to Miss Sturm, the nurse, not only in caring for the sick, but also in driving the automobile over Honduras' roads and through her rivers. Miss Kurz arrived in the United States early in December, 1930, on her first home furlough.

Walter H. Herrscher received his religious training in his home at his mother's knee, and in Nazareth Evangelical Church, St. Louis, Mo. Having a mechanical turn of mind, he entered the David Rankin Jr. School of Mechanical Trades; but his inner self was not satisfied until he entered Elmhurst College. His next step was a complete course



Sisters Hulda with some of her patients

in Eden Theological Seminary. After his marriage to Miss Martha Fiedler of St. Louis, they took up home missionary work in Sacramento, California.

Mr. and Mrs. Herrscher volunteered for mission work in Honduras; and on October 4, 1927, they arrived at Puerto Cortes. This first term they are in charge of Bethel, the boarding home for boys, and Mr. Herrscher is pastor of the Evangelical Church in Chamelecon.

Two little girls have blessed their union, Joanne Martha and Helen Elizabeth.

Mrs. Martha Fiedler Herrscher of St. Louis, Mo., began her career as a business woman, having graduated from St. Louis University in Commerce and Finance. Later she attended the Biblical Seminary in New York City to prepare for Christian work. Her interest in missions dates back to her confirmation days under the Rev. Poth, pastor of Nazareth Church, who had also been a missionary on the Gold Coast and a co-worker of the Rev. Dewald. Mrs. Herrscher was the first president of the Women's Federation of Northern California; and with Mr. Herrscher assisted in the development of the Golden West Evangelical Leadership Training School.

Sister Hulda M. Sturm is a daughter of Pastor and Mrs. C. F. Sturm of Marthasville, Mo. Miss Sturm has known the meaning of service for the Master from her earliest recollections. She entered the St. Louis Deaconess Hospital in 1915; and graduated in 1919 as a deaconess and registered nurse.

Miss Sturm served eight years in hospital work, and five years as a parish deaconess for St. James Church, St. Louis. At the same time she attended evening classes at Brookes Bible Institute, graduating from there in 1925. She sailed for Honduras in September, 1928.

Miss Sturm is the only nurse in a city of 10,000 people. In 1929 she treated about 430 persons without the aid of a doctor. A class in hygiene, examinations of, and the dispensing of medicines to, the school children form a part of her routine work. Much of her work lies in the outlying villages that are reached by automobile or on mule-back, where she ministers to a suffering humanity that cannot come to San Pedro Sula to see her.

FI FTEEN men and women have had a part in conducting the missionary enterprise in Honduras. Three of their number are no longer members of the Honduras Conference. Others are in the States on furlough. Nine members are usually on the field, and these nine must carry on the work assigned to twelve persons. Let us remember them in our prayers, that their strength, their courage, their faith fail not; and that they may be conscious of the faithfulness of our Lord when he said, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."